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National Service Caucus Helps Kick-Off Summer of Service

Bi-Partisan Congressional Members Lead, Encourage Service Initiatives Throughout the Country

WASHINGTON, D.C. – Today, Members of the National Service Caucus helped kick-off United We Serve, a national initiative which encourages Americans to volunteer in their communities. The new initiative was announced last week by President Barack Obama to help meet growing social needs resulting from the economic downturn, aiming to both expand the impact of existing organizations by engaging new volunteers in their work and encourage volunteers to develop their own projects with friends, family, and neighbors. The summer of service officially began today with an appearance by Michelle Obama at the National Conference on Volunteering and Service in San Francisco, California, and lasts until September 11, 2009.

“United We Serve is about empowering people to make a real, concrete difference in their communities,” said Congresswoman Doris Matsui (D-CA). “This summer, the National Service Caucus is helping to lay the foundation for a summer of service – a sustained, collaborative and focused effort to promote service as a way of life for all Americans.”

The National Service Caucus (NSC) is a bi-partisan group of legislators who are committed to supporting and encouraging national service programs, encouraging community service, and as a result making a real difference in the life of millions of Americans. National Service Caucus Co-Chairs Reps. Matsui, David Price (D-NC), Todd Russell Platts (R-PA), and Vernon Ehlers (R-MI), are encouraging Members of Congress to host events in their districts and volunteer hand-in-hand with their constituents throughout the summer.

“I have seen first-hand in my own Congressional District that providing service opportunities for our citizens strengthens our communities and provides needed assistance to our most disadvantaged citizens,” said Rep. Platts. “I urge my fellow citizens to take time out of their daily lives and give back to their communities.”

In the spirit of this new initiative, Congressman Joseph Crowley (D-NY), and NSC Member, will kick-off his “Summer of Service” initiative tomorrow, Tuesday, June 23rd, at the Benedict Avenue Food Pantry with local volunteers and members of Food Bank for New York City. Throughout the summer, Rep. Crowley will lead local residents and leaders in a coordinated effort to encourage Bronx communities to engage in service projects across the Borough – helping spur community improvements, rejuvenation and renovation.

“Like many Americans, I was inspired by President Obama's call to serve, and I am proud to help kick off the 'United We Serve' initiative in my hometown of New York City,” said Rep. Crowley. “We hope United We Serve will encourage communities across the nation to engage in all kinds of action - including simple projects like graffiti removal, community beautification, or helping in a food pantry, which can go a long way in supporting communities and helping to build a better and stronger tomorrow.”

“Each one of us can make a big difference in our community by volunteering, and volunteer service is needed more than ever during these difficult economic times,” Congressman Ehlers said. “I hope the United We Serve campaign helps encourage people everywhere to become engaged in their communities so that they can make a difference the lives of others.”

“The President and First Lady set a stellar example of service that everyone can take back to their own communities,” said Rep. Price. “They are right to acknowledge that service cannot be confined to one day or one event, and hopefully all Americans can draw inspiration and give back in their own way throughout the summer to help shape stronger communities.”

For more information about the United We Serve and events happening in communities across the country this summer, please visit www.serve.gov

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